UNITED
NATIONS

S

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/23323
26 December 1991
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

LETTER DATED 26 DECEMBER 1991 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ALGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to enclose a document relating to Algeria's position following the publication of the Secretary-General's report on the situation concerning Western Sahara (S/23299 of 19 December 1991).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dr. Messaoud AIT CHAALAL
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Algeria has taken note of the report issued by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 19 December 1991 concerning the question of Western Sahara in the context of the implementation of the United Nations plan for the holding of a referendum for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

As a State designated by the United Nations, along with the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, as an observer of the process of settlement of the question of Western Sahara, Algeria wishes to state its position regarding the issuance of this document, as follows:

First: In the context of a joint mission of good offices by the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Secretary-General of the United Nations under a mandate from the General Assembly of the United Nations, and following very lengthy discussions, the two parties to the conflict, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO, formally accepted proposals for the settlement of this question.

By its resolution 658 (1990) of 27 June 1990, the Security Council approved the content of these proposals. By adopting its resolution 690 (1991) of 27 April 1991, the Security Council confirmed this formula for a settlement and released resources for its implementation through the United Nations Mission for the referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

In so doing, the Security Council set the seal of its authority on the plan for the referendum for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, a plan which is explicit in its provisions, precise in its implementation timetable and engages the authority and prestige of the United Nations in respect of compliance with and implementation of the plan.

It should be emphasized that at all stages of the drawing up of the settlement plan, the two parties were systematically consulted and their formal consent was requested and obtained by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Second: This peace plan, which has won extremely wide support within the international community, has unfortunately become bogged down because of many difficulties and obstacles with which the authority of the United Nations and the personnel of MINURSO have been confronted.

Third: This situation has naturally given rise to serious concern on the part of the States Members of the United Nations, and of international public opinion. Algeria has on several occasions associated itself with this concern, particularly through approaches to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the two parties to the conflict and the members of the Security Council calling for urgent action to safeguard the peace operation in Western Sahara.

Regrettably, the situation has continued to deteriorate, and has led to the unfortunate resignation of Mr. Johannes Manz, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara.

Fourth: By accepting the peace proposals received in 1988 and Security Council resolutions 658 (1990) and 690 (1991), the two parties had explicitly taken cognizance of and accepted that the 1974 census would be the reference point and base for identifying the Saharans who should participate in the referendum for self-determination.

To introduce new elements without the prior consent of the two parties would be incompatible with the spirit and the letter of the various Security Council resolutions and risk calling in question the process of settlement of the conflict in Western Sahara as initially conceived by the United Nations and accepted by the parties, and could thus definitively compromise the considerable efforts that have been made by the international community over a number of years to bring peace to the region.

Guided by its attachment to the principles on the basis of which the United Nations was established, and motivated by its strong desire for the restoration of peace and stability in the Maghreb, to the benefit of all its peoples and of Maghreb unity, Algeria has worked sincerely for the advent of an early, peaceful, just and lasting solution to the conflict in Western Sahara. In this context, it has been unstinting in its support for the good offices of the United Nations and OAU for the settlement of this question, as well as for MINURSO in the context of the mandate assigned to that Mission.

The great merit of Security Council resolutions 658 (1990) and 690 (1991) is to have drawn the lessons from a conflict which has already been going on for 16 years by endorsing a settlement plan which won the support of the two parties to the conflict, without whose cooperation no real solution can be envisaged.

Accordingly, Algeria is convinced that the Security Council will be able to preserve the chances of implementing an early, peaceful, just and lasting solution to the conflict in Western Sahara which is so earnestly desired by the entire international community, and in particular by the peoples of the Maghreb.